

ATTORNEY OR PARTY WITHOUT ATTORNEY (Name, state bar number, and address)  TELEPHONE NO.: _____ FAX NO. (Optional): _____ E-MAIL ADDRESS (Optional): _____ ATTORNEY FOR (Name): _____	FOR COURT USE ONLY
<b>SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF SONOMA</b> 600 ADMINISTRATION DRIVE, ROOM 107-J SANTA ROSA, CALIFORNIA 95403-2878	
PLAINTIFF/PETITIONER: _____	
DEFENDANT/RESPONDENT: _____	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ADR INFORMATION SHEET</b>  <b>[Sonoma County Superior Court Rules, Rule 16]</b></p> <p>(Check one):      <input type="checkbox"/> <b>UNLIMITED CASE</b>                      <input type="checkbox"/> <b>LIMITED CASE</b>          (Amount demanded exceeds                      (Amount demanded is          \$25,000)    \$25,000 or less)</p>	CASE NUMBER: _____  Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____ Assigned Judge: _____

**NOTICE TO ALL PARTIES AND THEIR ATTORNEYS**

The policy of the Sonoma County Superior Court is:

"The formal litigation of legal claims and disputes is expensive and time consuming. The overall results achieved by some or all of the parties are often unsatisfactory. There are many modern alternatives to formal court litigation which are less expensive, less time consuming, and more beneficial to the parties. It is therefore the firm policy and goal of this court to encourage the parties in all civil cases to explore and pursue private dispute resolution alternatives at the earliest possible date." (Local Rule 16.1.)

Although most (90-98%) cases do settle, many settlements come only after a considerable amount of time, money, and resources have been expended. Such expenditures, as well as the adversarial nature of litigation, can be a disincentive to settlement. The Sonoma County Superior Court encourages the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) as early as possible after the parties become aware of a dispute.

Most ADR processes are voluntary and are paid for by the parties themselves, but ADR has proved in many cases to be faster, cheaper, and more effective than traditional litigation.

**ADVANTAGES OF ADR:**

The filing of your complaint or answer may be just the beginning of the costs that you will incur during the course of your lawsuit. Lawsuits can be extremely costly. By utilizing ADR methods early in the course of your case, you may significantly reduce these costs by either resolving the case before expensive discovery and trial proceedings are commenced or by narrowing the scope of your discovery by identifying disputed and undisputed factual and legal issues.

ADR can be a fast, economical, efficient, and effective way to resolve civil cases, and most litigants report satisfaction with the process. ADR procedures can be scheduled at your convenience and can be completed in a fraction of the time required for traditional litigation. The cost of ADR will depend on the procedure and the provider you select, and the cost is typically less than litigation.

Most ADR processes are confidential but can result in enforceable agreements. Many ADR processes will give you an opportunity to test the strengths and weaknesses of your case without adverse impact in the event of a trial. Depending upon the method of ADR you select, it may be the last chance for you to control the outcome of your dispute before you place the decision in the hands of a judge or jury.

**METHODS OF ADR:**

**A. MEDIATION:** Mediation is one of the most frequently used methods of ADR because it is informal, quick, convenient and confidential. In this process the parties select a neutral mediator who facilitates the identification of issues and areas of agreement and assists in finding a resolution or settlement of the dispute. Since mediation requires the agreement of the parties to resolve the matter, control of the proceedings and a determination of the settlement terms remains completely in the parties' hands. The mediator remains neutral and assists the parties in arriving at terms that are mutually agreeable.

PLAINTIFF/PETITIONER:	CASE NUMBER:
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**B. ARBITRATION:** The parties jointly employ a neutral third party or a panel of neutrals to listen to both sides and render a decision. The parties are free to make the arbitrator's decision binding or non-binding. When non-binding, the arbitrator's decision serves as guide or influence upon the parties to bring them closer to settlement. If it is binding, the decision of the arbitrator will be final and generally avoids any further proceedings in the case. Non-binding judicial arbitration may be ordered in certain cases before trial.

**C. EARLY NEUTRAL EVALUATION:** A neutral evaluator is hired by the parties to give an evaluation of the case to help settle it. You or your attorney will be permitted to prepare a written statement, present critical witnesses or other evidence, argue your case to the evaluator, meet separately and confidentially with the evaluator, and utilize the evaluator to communicate any settlement offers to the opposing party.

**D. PRIVATE SETTLEMENT CONFERENCE:** A voluntary settlement conference is similar to early neutral evaluation in that the parties employ a neutral settlement officer who attempts to persuade the parties to accept a compromise position. It is a form of facilitated negotiation in which the settlement officer may express an opinion about the value of the case, the substantive merits of each party's position, and the probable outcome of the trial.

There are various other methods or combinations of methods of ADR, such as summary jury trial, mini-trial, special master and discovery referee. The court encourages the parties to be creative in selecting the process which has the best chance of resolving the case as quickly, effectively, and inexpensively as possible. You will have a chance to review your ADR options at the time of the Early Mediation and Case Management Conference.

**The undersigned party is willing to agree to any of the following forms of ADR at this time (for family law and probate actions only). Your selection will inform the other parties in the case of your current thoughts regarding the use of ADR. If all parties agree on a particular ADR method, you will be asked to file a stipulation on the court's form. The stipulation form (Sonoma County Superior Court form #MISC-101) can be found at the court's web site and is available at the court.)**

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Mediation                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Early Neutral Evaluation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-binding Private Arbitration | <input type="checkbox"/> Binding Private Arbitration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary Settlement Conference | <input type="checkbox"/> Summary Jury Trial          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Judicial Arbitration        |

I / We certify that I / We have read and understood (or have had explained to me / us) the foregoing.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Party

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Party

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Attorney for Party

Additional signatures are attached

**NOTE: This form requires the signatures of the parties and their attorney. All parties must complete, file and serve this form in accordance with Sonoma County Superior Court Rules, Rule 16. See Rule 16.3 for specific filing and service instructions.**